

Thomas Paull House
1314 Chapline Street
Wheeling
Ohio County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-199

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23-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THOMAS PAULL HOUSE

HABS No. WV-199

Location: 1314 Chapline Street, Wheeling,
Ohio County, West Virginia.

Present Owner: Wade Kepner.

Present Occupant: Kepner Funeral Home.

Present Use: Funeral Home.

Significance: Built during the 1830s, this stately home is a reminder of the time when the 1300 block of Chapline Street was an elegant neighborhood. This simple two-and-a-half story brick building displays Federal symmetry and some modest Greek Revival detailing.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Unknown. There are no Land Books for Ohio County prior to 1845. Thomas Paull purchased Lot 7, Square 15 in 1829 for \$1500.00 and sold it in 1843 for \$5,000.00. A building must have been built, accordingly, between these two dates. There is no other written documentation available to date the erection of this building more exactly.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Paull house was built on Lot 7, square 15, in the Clay District of Wheeling. The following references to this property are found in the Ohio County, West Virginia Deed Books.

1829 Deed, 17 July, recorded in Deed book 15, page 195, Noah Zane and his wife to Thomas Paull \$500.00 for Lot 7, Square 15.

1843 Deed, 7 August, recorded in Deed Book 26, page 466. Thomas Paull and wife to Archibald Paull \$5,000.00 for Lot 7, Square 15.

Will recorded in Will Book 1, page 86. Archibald and Catherine Paull devised to Julia C. Paull Lot 7, Square 15.

- 1863 Deed, 30 March, recorded in Deed Book 46, page 266. Hierome L. Opie and wife Julia C. Paull to James C. Orr \$8,000.00 for Lot 7, Square 15.
- 1868 Deed, 6 July, recorded in Deed Book 53, page 493. James C. Orr and wife to Samuel Ott \$10,000.00 for Lot 7, Square 15.
- 1877 Deed, 10 May, recorded in Deed Book 67, page 42. Samuel P. Ott et al to Daniel C. List, executor of estate of Robert Hazlett Cummins \$12,500.00 for Lot 7, Square 15. (Ann Ott married R. H. Cummins)
- 1887 Deed, 15 June, recorded in Deed book 80, page 60. Daniel C. List, executor of estate of Robert H. Cummins to Daniel C. List, Trustee for Elizabeth I. and Ann M. Cummins \$12,500.00 for Lot 7, Square 15.
- 1939 Deed, 31 October, recorded in Deed Book 256, page 478 (also see Will Book 21, page 142). James Cummins, Trustee for Ann M. Cummins to Thomas McK. Cummins \$1.00 for one-half interest in Lot 7, Square 15.
- 1939 Deed, 21 October, recorded in Deed Book 256, page 480 (also see Will Book 21, page 148). James Cummins, Trustee for Elizabeth I. Cummins to Thomas McK. Cummins \$1.00 for one-half interest in Lot 7, Square 15.
- 1946 Deed, 31 January, recorded in Deed Book 284, page 264. Thomas McKennan Cummins et al to Wade Kepner, Lot 7, Square 15.
4. Original plans, construction, etc: None known.
5. Alterations and additions: According to Mr. Wade Kepner, the house was in its original form at the time he purchased it in 1946. Since that time he has adapted it to his purposes, but he has made a conscious effort to preserve the original plan of the building as carefully as possible. The most significant change was the construction of a crosspassage way from the second floor of 1308 to the second floor of 1314 Chapline Street. This necessitated the creation of a large opening into one of the back bedrooms and a short stairway from the passage way into the house. Mr. Kepner also adapted the back rooms of the second floor to provide a ladies' lounge and a gentlemen's room. The central hallway, with front and back stairway, was left as he found it. Both front rooms were fully paneled, and the fireplaces were closed. The original door and window frames remain.

The first floor remains very much as he found it except for the removal of the fireplaces and the addition of full field paneling. The door and window frames again were left untouched. The first floor back door was changed and widened to accomodate caskets.

3. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

The structure erected by Thomas Paull sometime between 1829 and 1853 has housed three of Wheeling's families for over 125 years.

The Paull family was extremely active in Wheeling from the city's earliest days. Thomas Paull was a native of Pennsylvania who moved to Wheeling and became one of its leading citizens and pioneer merchants. He died in 1858.

Dr. Robert Hazlett Cummins, husband of Ann (Daughter of Samuel Ott) was born in February 1817. He received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1841 at which time he moved to Wheeling and set up his practice in partnership first with Dr. J. W. Clemens and later with his brother James. As a doctor whose specialty was obstetrics, Dr. Cummins "heart was full of kindness, his keen intellect ever busy gathering new facts, and his energy in the practice of his chosen calling never flagged."¹ He had a large practice and was well known for both his skill and his kindness. He served in 1870 as President of the Medical Society of the City of Wheeling and County of Ohio and at the time of his death was President-elect of the Medical Society of the State of West Virginia. He died on April 12, 1873, having directed that an autopsy be made of his body and that his family make no objection. The "feeling of regard for him was shared by all classes of society, and many will recall the sad scene, on the day of his funeral, as great numbers of humble women stood with streaming eyes around the casket of their dead friend and physician."²

His daughters Ann and Elizabeth Cummins inherited their father's house at 1314 Chapline Street and lived there from 1877 until their deaths in 1939.

Wade Kepner of Kepner Funeral Homes purchased this house in 1946. Since that time the house has been operated as part of the funeral parlor business.

C. Sources of Information:

Anonymous. History of the Upper Ohio Valley. Madison, Wisconsin; Braut and Fuller, 1890.

Interview; Mr. Wade Kepner, August 23, 1976.

1. Anonymous. p. 576.

2. Ibid.

Prepared by: Candace Reed
Architectural Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1976

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This early Wheeling mansion is a simple symmetrical Greek Revival building with a classical portico.

b. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Rectangular; forty-eight feet across the five-bay front (west) by twenty-five feet deep, rear section approximately thirty feet wide by thirty-five feet deep; two-and-a-half stories plus basement, two-story rear.
2. Foundations: Stone ashlar and brick.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Cut stone basement, brick walls. All walls and trim are painted beige.
4. Structural system, framing: Wooden joists.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Flat-roofed shallow Ionic distyle portico shelters front entrance. Apertures in soffit of lintel suggests that columns may originally have been paired, making a tetra-style portico.
6. Chimneys: There is one chimney in rear section, south side.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doors and doorways: The front doorway has paneled sidelights and transom light, flanked by pilasters. The door itself is not original. There are two other doors at the rear of the building. One doorway has been widened to accomodate the building's use.
 - b. Windows and shutters: See photographs and elevation drawing.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip, shallow pitch, tar paper covering.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: simple cornice, overhanging 18".
9. Special features: There is an enclosed bridge at the second floor, north side, connecting the Paull building with another building of the funeral home.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: See measured drawing for first floor. The second floor is organized similarly but has been further subdivided into small rooms toward the rear. The enclosed bridge connects this building with the adjacent one to the north through an opening in the middle room. There is a small attic loft space above the front section of the house and a two room basement at the rear of the house.
2. Stairways: A central open stairway in the foyer connects the first and second floors. This stair continues on to the attic space. There is another stair to the second floor in the southeast corner of the building. Both stairs are original. There is an interior stair to the basement in the rear northeast corner of the building.
3. Flooring: Both the first and second floor are fully carpeted throughout, covering the original wood plank flooring, part of which is exposed under the first floor stairs. The attic floor is wood plank, and the basement floor is brick.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All the walls on both the first and second floors are plaster, painted white. In addition, virtually all the walls have an applied rectangular pattern moulding, which is not original. There is a deep relief moulding at the wall-ceiling intersection in most rooms. This appears to be original. Both the first and second floors have high, twelve foot, ceilings. The attic has gypsum board applied to the walls and ceiling. The basement walls are exposed brick.
5. Doors and doorways: Many interior door casings are original, but some have been changed with later alterations. Of particular interest are the pointed arch doorways connecting the large rooms of the first floor.
6. Special decorative features: There are several decorative features of interest. The stair banister of the front stair is terminated in a delicate curved design. The newel post on the rear stair, while heavier in design, is also well detailed. Other features are a plaster flower relief pattern on the front foyer walls and cast iron floral decorations, designed originally for chandeliers, on the ceiling of the first floor foyer and second floor hall.
7. Mechanical equipment: Contemporary central air conditioning and duct systems have been integrated into the building. Plenums and registers are well concealed.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The building is set back approximately twenty feet from the street. The first floor is approximately six feet above grade. The site rises gradually, to the level of the first floor at the rear. The basement is

partially exposed along the north wall. There are adjacent buildings about twenty five feet away to each side and seventy five feet to the rear. The building is part of a complex, but there are no outbuildings directly associated with this structure.

Prepared by: John McRae
Architectural Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1976

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, HABS Principal Architect, in cooperation with the Friends of Wheeling, Inc. The measured drawings were made during the summer of 1976 under the supervision of John M. McRae (University of Florida) with architectural technicians Mark L. Hall, Foreman, Pennsylvania State University); Edward C. Freeman (Arizona State University); Ruthie D. Wiley (Mississippi State University); Alan G. Wilig (City College of New York); and Architectural Historian Candace Reed (George Washington University). The photographs were taken in 1977 by HABS Photographer Jack E. Boucher.